

Expanding Access to All



September 28, 2015

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Washtenaw Health Plan (WHP) to urge CMS to approve the federal waiver submitted by the State of Michigan. The WHP is a county health plan, which at one time had nearly 10,000 members, now we have nearly 16,000 Washtenaw County residents on the Healthy Michigan Plan- the Medicaid expansion program.

At our office, we have assisted thousands of former WHP members enroll in the HMP and access comprehensive medical coverage, along with a dental and vision benefit. We have seen people visit a dentist, sometimes for the first time in decades, and manage serious, chronic health conditions, without the worry and stress of costs. I am certain the nearly 600,000 HMP enrollees would want you to know the ability to access medical, dental and vision care, not only greatly improves health, but also alleviates the stress and worry that is inherent in being uninsured.

We hope negotiations between CMS and the State of Michigan will focus on preserving the HMP program and protecting consumers. The "healthy" part of the HMP has been a central focus, as evidenced by low co-pays, \$1 to \$3 for most services, and are waived entirely for numerous chronic health conditions. HMP recipients with income over 100% of the federal poverty level can get their contribution reduced by 50% by committing to a healthy behavior: exercise, quit smoking, lose weight, etc... We expect the State of Michigan will remain committed to promoting health and that contributions should remain an area where a consumer has the ability to dramatically reduce costs by engaging in and committing to healthy behaviors.

We have had an intimate experience with people who have been diagnosed with critical health conditions, require medically necessary medications, experience excruciating tooth pain, and when they can access the needed care, it is a tremendous relief, and sometimes can be no less than life saving. It seems implausible that the HMP could suddenly go away, but that is the real possibility if Michigan's 2nd waiver is not approved.

We are confident CMS will approve the waiver and support the ongoing incredible success of the Healthy Michigan Plan.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Krista Nordberg", is written over a horizontal line.

Krista Nordberg
Director of Enrollment and Advocacy Services